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SUBJECT: POST COP-15 PRESS BRIEFING BY UK ENERGY SECRETARY  
MILIBAND

¶1. (U) Summary: Ed Miliband, UK Secretary for Energy and Climate Change, briefed the diplomatic corps, press and environmental NGOs on December 21, on results of the Copenhagen Conference (COP-15). Prime Minister Gordon Brown joined by satellite from Scotland. Together they focused on three key points: (1) the UK should persuade other countries, notably the US, China, and other European countries, to agree to more ambitious carbon emissions reduction targets; (2) the UK and other countries should work toward a legally binding international treaty that would, among other things, set up a transparent mechanism to evaluate all countries' progress; (3) the decision-making process in the Copenhagen talks should be streamlined to allow the 192 countries to find common ground on substantive issues. End Summary.

¶2. (U) PM Brown told the group that although it was disappointing not to achieve an international legally binding climate change treaty, the UK would continue to press for it. The main outcome of COP-15 is the agreement to limit the increase in global warming to 2 degrees Celsius. Brown outlined steps that need to be taken next. First, by January 31, 2010, all countries should submit their emissions targets. Second, other countries should be persuaded to set higher range emission reduction targets to reduce overall carbon production from 55 gigatons to 40 gigatons by 2020. Brown also said developing countries, such as Bangladesh and Maldives, should receive climate change mitigation funding as part of the USD 30B pledge from developed countries over the next three years. Third, "barely a handful of countries" oppose a legally binding treaty and the best time to move forward with talks is at the next climate change conference in Bonn, Germany in six months hosted by Chancellor Merkel. Lastly, Brown complained there is no vehicle in the UN decision-making process for countries to find common ground or bridge the differences.

¶3. (U) Miliband's remarks focused on steps the UK must continue domestically. He claimed the British government is taking action, but needed to "re-win" the case, and he explained the UK will benefit economically in being at the forefront. Miliband said the UN is central to the process, although he expressed frustration that too much time was spent arguing over procedural issues rather than on the more important substantive ones. Miliband noted that important movements in history were never successful on the first attempt and that COP-15 had generated an "irreversible shift" toward addressing climate change. Miliband specifically mentioned the U.S. when stating that many countries still need domestic climate change campaigns to build more support in-country.

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